

The Valley COMIC N · E · W · S



ISSUE # 59
March 19, 1992

FREE

FEATURES: THE FAR SIDE, DOONESBURY,
CALVIN & HOBBS, VIEWS OF THE WORLD,
TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT, THE BRASS AND FERN,
EARTHWEEK, IZZY GESELL'S *HUMOR ME*,
JOE BOB BRIGGS, LEOLD AT 15,
THIS MODERN WORLD, LOCAL HEROES

STORIES: AS THE WORLD YEARNs
PARTY LIGHTS
DOLLARS AND SENSE
1ST AMENDMENT FOLLIES
A HARD RAIN'S GONNA FALL
BETTER OR WORSE

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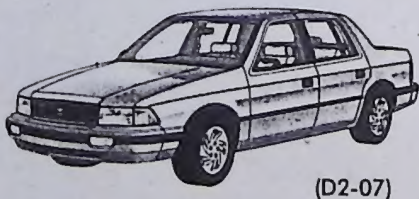
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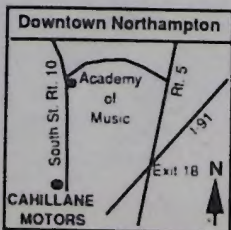
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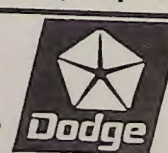
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PAGE THREE

by Mike Chrisman

I was scrunched down all comfy, waiting for my daughter's high school musical to start. I love high school musicals, and I was really psyched to see this one (*The Pajama Game*). The orchestra was flying through the overture: "Hey There," "Hernando's Hideaway..." and great stuff like that. I was in about the 10th row with an unobstructed view of the stage. Heaven. Then 30 seconds before the orchestra soared into its thrilling climax, this incredibly huge couple lumbered in and plopped down *exactly* in front of me. The woman, besides being enormously tall, had to have been a finalist in the Miss Big Hair Pageant, and her date — taller yet — was no doubt not playing in the NBA that night only because *he was too big!*

So I spent a fun evening glaring at two gigantic people's backs. Since I couldn't see the show, I had plenty of time to think, and I believe I have some questions American citizens (normal-sized ones) deserve to have answered.

For example: why do big people *always* sit in the front? Do they have bad eyes? And why do they always sit as straight as they possibly can? Don't they know how to slouch? Does it ever enter their minds that they look like The Great Wall of China to the person behind them? Are their brains too small for their bodies, like dinosaurs?

It seems to me a theater chain could make a lot of money if they'd use any of the superb plans I came up with that evening: 1) build special tall people's rows, with seats that are sunken, like a rich person's bathtub; 2) make all the tall people sit in the back; 3) do both. The theaters would stop all tall people as they were coming in and make them stand next to a line on the door, modelled after the ones they have on the scarier Disney World rides: "If your head comes *above* this line, you must sit in *these* seats."

Then, just in case a tall person felt they could throw their height around and sat in a regular person's row, there'd be buttons on the backs of the seats that when you pushed them, irregular chunks of granite would start rapidly grinding against the tall person's butt. Of course there'd be potential for abuse of this device (by teenagers playing a prank on a friend), so there'd have to be a law that if you used this button on a non-tall person, the police would take away your Nintendo.

I know all this sounds kind of harsh, like I don't really *approve* of tall people. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tall people have their place. Except that it's *not right in front of me!* I'm not saying I want to chop off their heads or anything. No, that would impair their motor functions too much. But is it so unreasonable to ask them to be hospitalized so the doctors could remove three vertebrae? I don't think so. Certainly the normal (average-sized) theater-going public would be a lot less likely to complain about unemployment and the national debt if they weren't so frustrated by tall people every time they went to a movie.

So, hey (regular-sized) citizens -- it's an election year.... Let the politicians know: get those tall people out of the front rows! You've got nothing to lose but your view of some lummo's humongous back!

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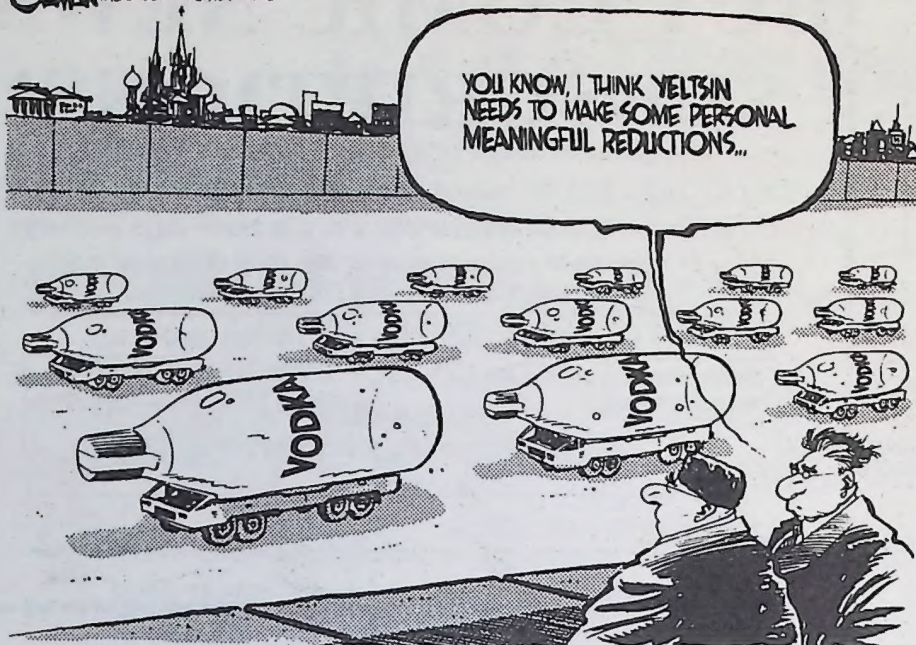


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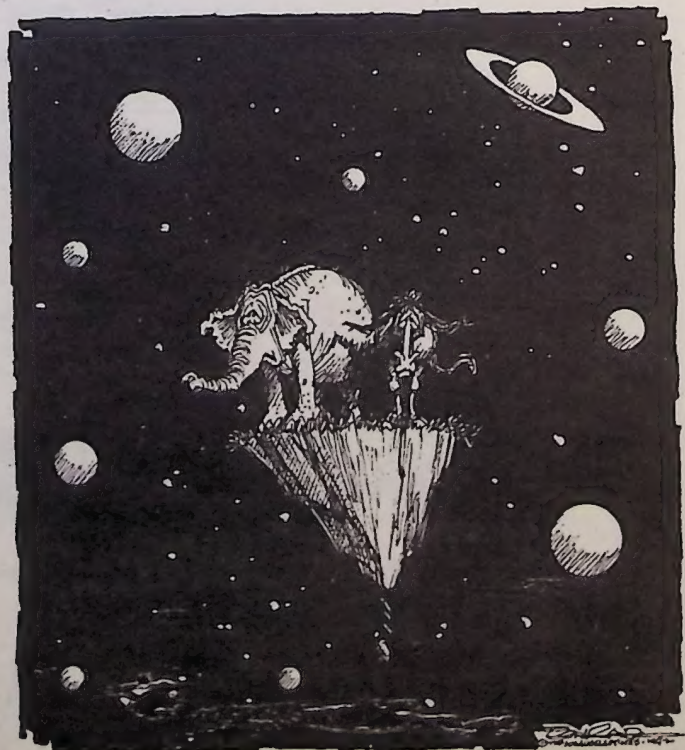
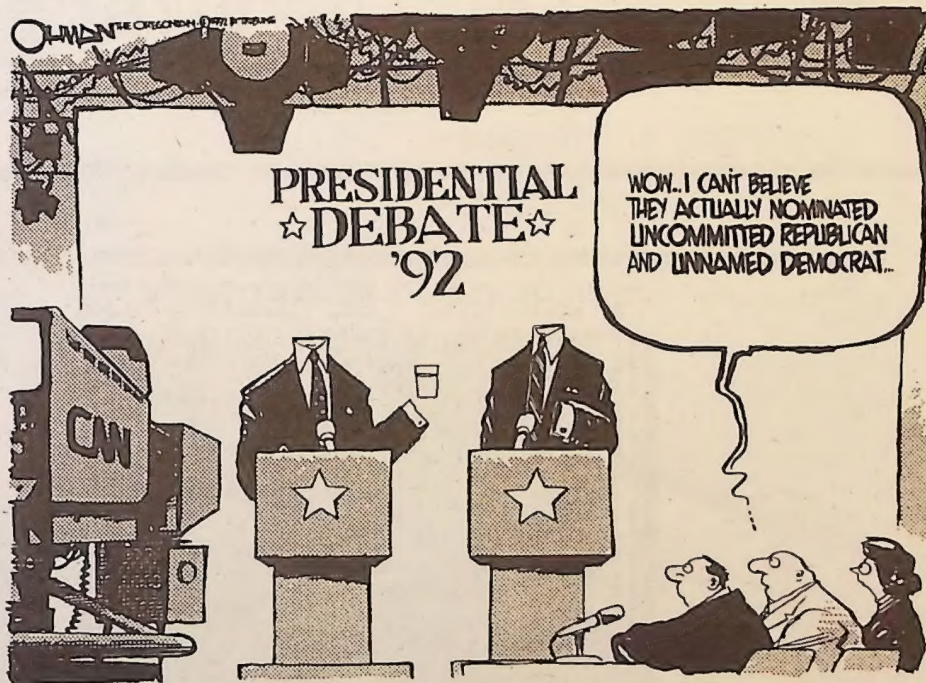
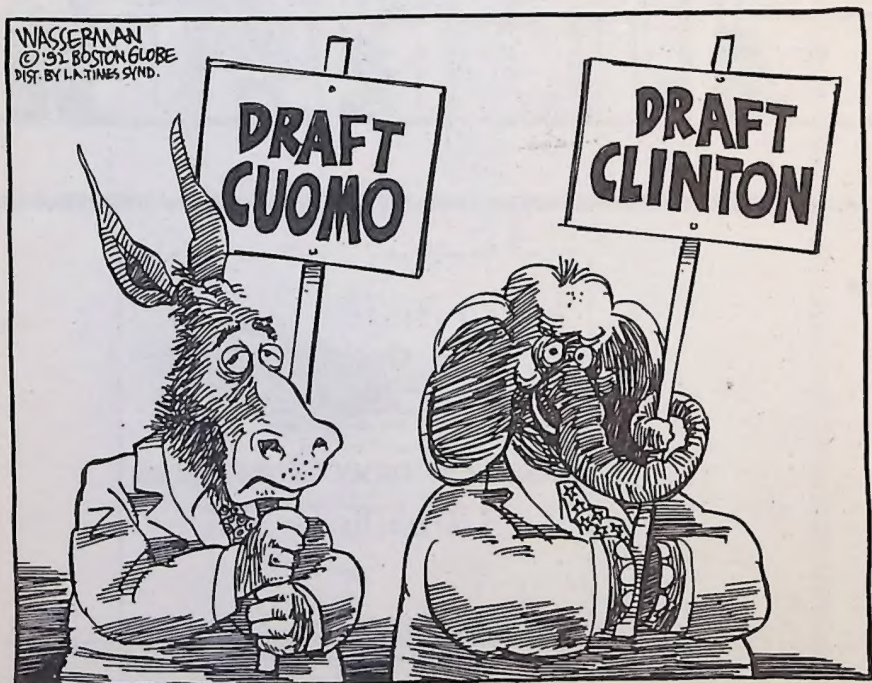
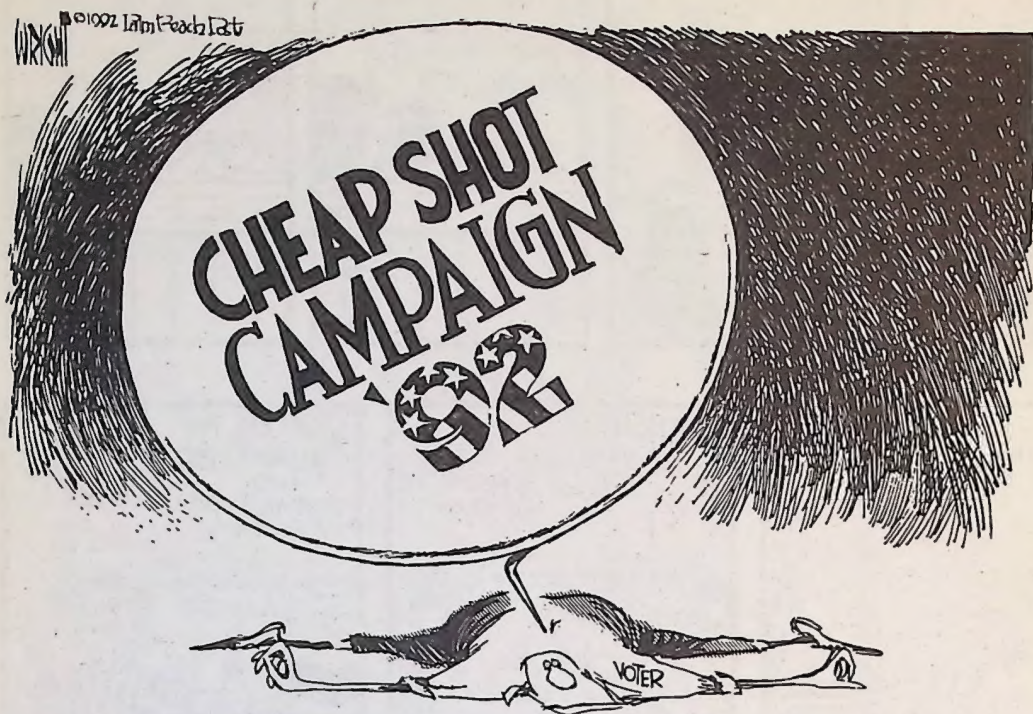
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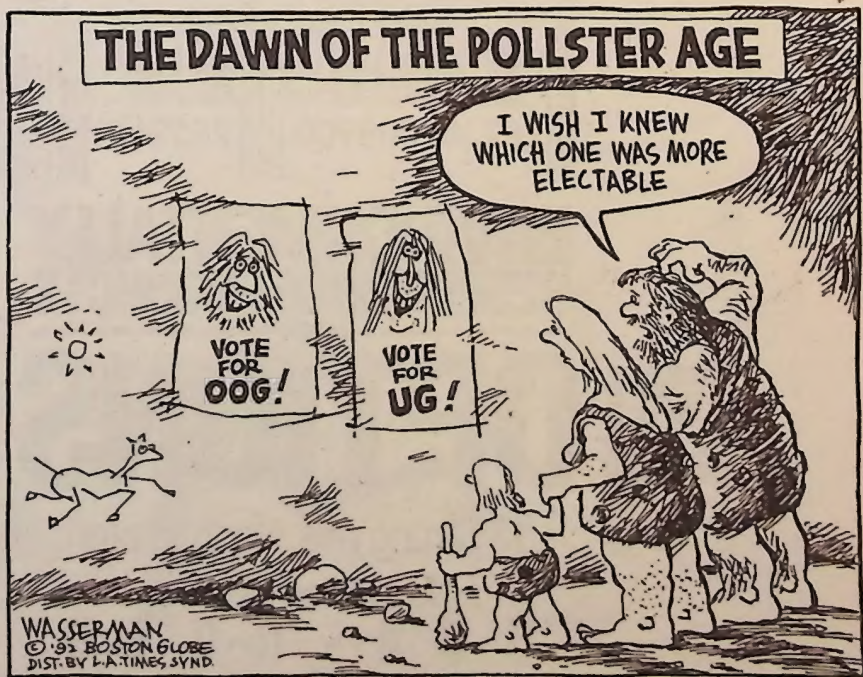
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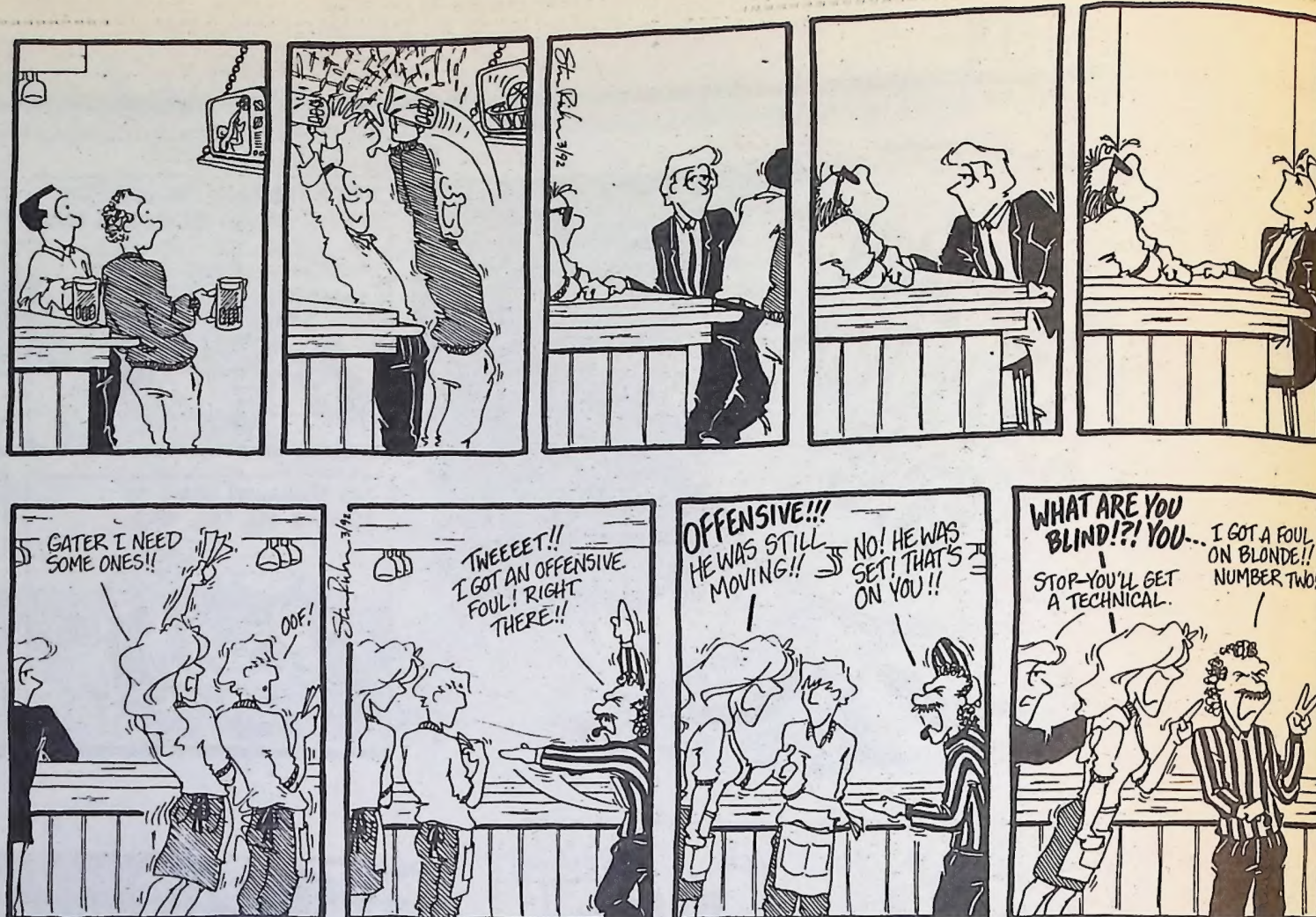


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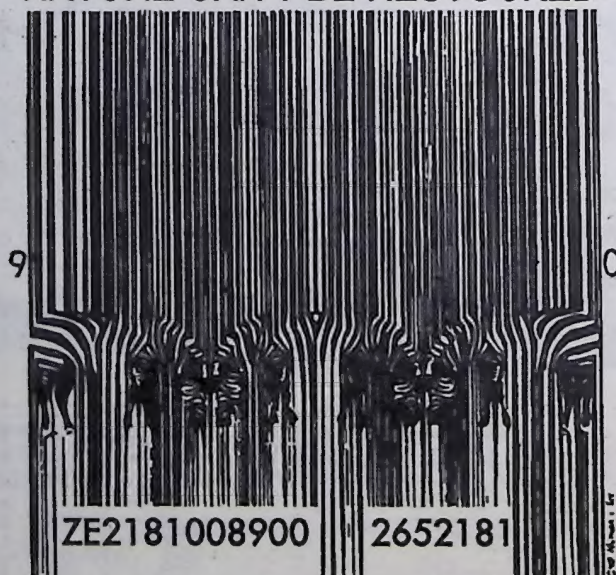


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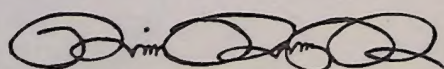
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ment for the Arts painting
entitled "Sexual Liaison."
What filth!



Observe the
sleazy erotic
overtones—the
sweaty, panting
bodies locked in
lascivious lust!

Hmm. I made a
mistake. Actually,
the catalogue says the
title is "God Loves You
and the Red, White and
Blue, Too."

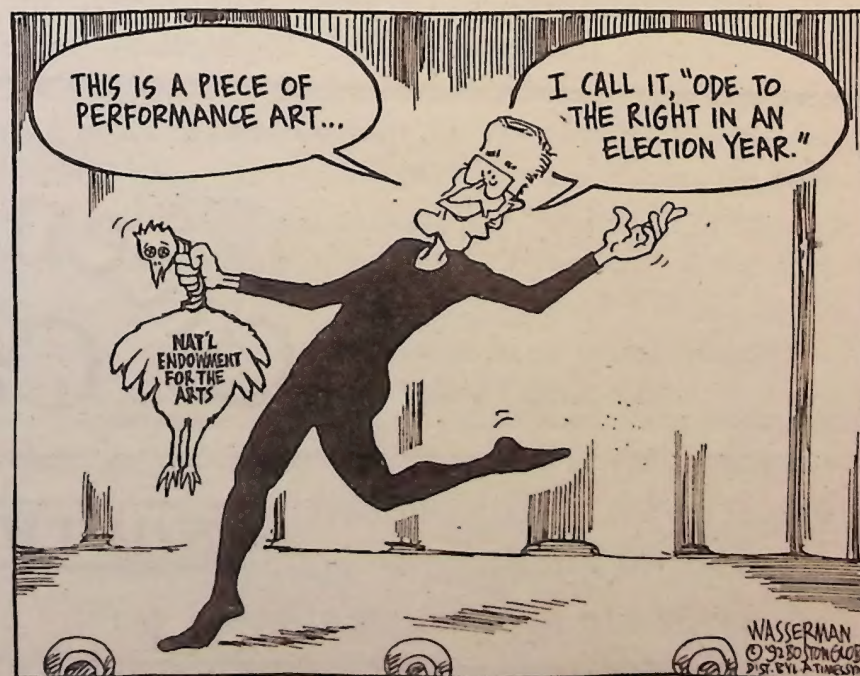
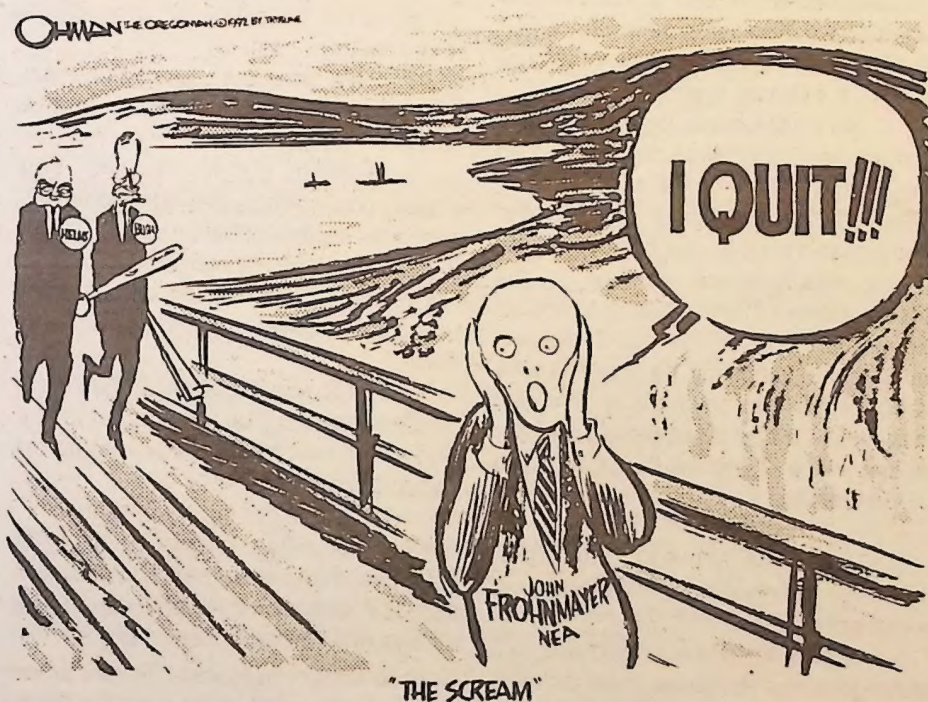


WASSERMAN
© 1992 Bim Beah Ret

Awsome in its beauty.



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JOE BOB BRIGGS

Do y'all know how the new high schools work?

I have a nephew named Lonnie Phipps who's been living at the trailer house, trying to finish 12th grade while his parents are off in Florida arguing over who was meaner and so doesn't deserve to get the dresser set and bureau that Grandma had. And Lonnie's been bringing his report card home all year and all it had on it was A's and one B, and so I was thinking about having Lonnie write some speeches for me, except I reconsidered when I remembered that Lonnie never talks. He mostly sits in front of the TV set and watches ESPN Australian Rules Football, that game where the object is to sling mud on your face and kick a giant ball into your opponent's head until the umpire raises up his arms and gives you some points, for no apparent reason.

Anyhow, Lonnie brought home this letter last week that said he got a combined 485 on his SAT's. I don't know how much you know about the SAT's, but that's like an F. Naw, it's not the worst you can get. It's like an F-plus.

So I got Lonnie by the scruff of the neck and slouched down to school with him, and went in and talked to Lonnie's English teacher, and I said, "Miz Stinson" -- she was this tired-lookin' bent-over lady with too much cheek makeup -- "Miz Stinson, Lonnie here made A's in your class all year, and these SAT people, they say that basically he couldn't play 'Wheel of Fortune' even if the clue was 'Animal' and it had three letters and the first one was a 'd' and the third one was a 'g.' He wouldn't even get the *concept* of it."

And Miz Stinson, she said, "Lonnie is reading at above-average level for this school."

(I should point out right here, that Lonnie goes to one of those public schools where they bus in blacks, Mexicans, white

trash, Yuppies, Vietnamese, and, most horrifying of all, people who have recently relocated from Oklahoma. The goal is to never meet any person in the hall that's even remotely like yourself.)

And so I said to Miz Stinson, "What is the reading level for this school?"

And she said, "We have an 82 percent passing rate on the TEAMS test for English."

And I said, "What the heck is the TEAMS test for English?"

And she went into this long explanation about how the Texas Legislature was concerned about too many kids getting A's and B's and still not knowing how to read or add up numbers, and so they started giving this TEAMS test in Math and English, and if you don't pass the TEAMS test, then you don't graduate. And then she talked about how most of Lonnie's training for the last year was *training to take the TEAMS test*.

"How can you teach a boy that still picks his nose how to take a test before the test comes?"

"We have outlines of the basic material that will be covered on the TEAMS test," she said.

"Lemme get this straight. You *already know* what the questions are gonna be on the TEAMS test?"

"No. We know general areas. For example, the reading comprehension portion always deals with *Animal Farm*."

"You mean *Animal Farm* by George Orwell? The book about talkin' pigs that hasn't been worth reading for about 40 years now?"

"Oh, all our studnets read it."

"Whatever happened to *Silas Marner* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Grapes of Wrath*? Don't you always read those in senior English? I went to school in Hooks, Texas, where most people can't even read the name

stitched over their own pocket, and we *all* had to read that stuff."

"We've found that *Animal Farm* is the most manageable book for seniors."

"Because it's only twenty pages long! Any other book, they might have to learn to *read* first!"

So anyway, Miz Stinson and me went at it for a while longer, but the way it turns out is, all they do in the English class for the *entire year* is learn how to take the Texal Legislature graduation test.

"Perhaps," Miz Stinson said, using the word "perhaps" for about the fiftieth time, "perhaps Lonnie needs some special counseling in how to take a test."

"What do you mean, how to take a test?"

"We find that many of the students don't do well on the test, because they are culturally unfamiliar with testing procedures."

"Lonnie knows how to color in a little box with a Crayola, if that's what you're talking about."

"Lonnie is a very bright student," she said. At that moment Lonnie was scrunched down in his chair like a fat man's sofa cushion, pickin' burrs off his blue jeans. "I would recommend that Lonnie see the testing tutor."

"And what does the testing tutor do? Teach him how to spell his name, I hope."

"The testing tutor would be able to help Lonnie understand what he's being asked on the test."

"Listen to me, lady! He *understands* what he's being asked on the test. He does *not* understand what to *answer* on the test."

"You must understand," she said, "with the system being what it is, that we barely have time to get these students ready for this test. We can't give them a lot of individual attention."

"Lonnie doesn't need individual attention. He needs somebody standing in front of a blackboard saying 'Lonnie, notice that there's only two e's in the word "cheek," not *four* the way you spelled it.' And lemme ask you one more question. If the only purpose of high school is to pass this Texas Legislature test, then what are the report cards for? What do all the A's and B's mean? What exactly are those letters *reporting* on the card?"

"That would indicate," she said, "that Lonnie is in the top ten per cent of his class."

"That's what I was afraid of. You got anything to say, Lonnie?"

"Yeah." Lonnie tensed his forehead muscles. Sometimes Lonnie forgets what he wants to say.

"What is it, Lonnie?"

"I don't really care if I graduate. I know it's not the way I'm supposed to feel, but I don't care."

"Lonnie, you shouldn't say that," Miz Stinson said. "A high school diploma is something you'll need later on in life."

"Lady," I said, "you obviously don't expect there to be much going on in this boy's life."

When we got home, I told Lonnie he was right. I'd consider him a weenie if he *does* graduate. Miz Stinson needs to go back and read *Animal Farm* thirty, forty more times till she figures out the parts that deal specifically with her.

To discuss the meaning of life with Joe Bob, or to get free junk in the mail and Joe Bob's world famous "We Are the Weird" newsletter, write Joe Bob Briggs, P.O. Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Joe Bob's Fax line is always open: 214-368-2310.

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Warmest Winter

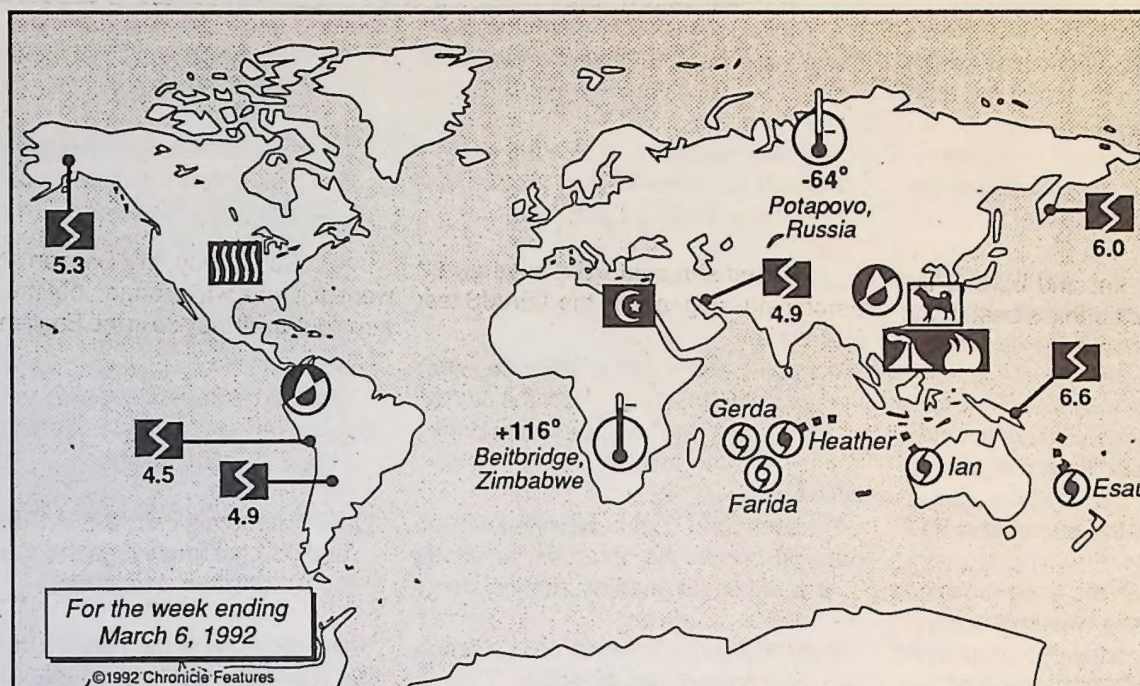
 U.S. government meteorologists reported that this winter has been the nation's warmest on record. Except for a few cold spells, this season can be characterized as a winter that never really arrived. The main reason that 93.2 percent of the 48 contiguous states reported warmer-than-normal weather, is that the main polar jet stream stayed unusually far north, along the U.S.-Canada border. At the same time, the subtropical jet stream blew warm moisture into the Midwest from the El Niño warm ocean current in the tropical Pacific, resulting in severe flooding in parts of Texas.


Ramadan

 A committee of six Egyptian astronomers formally declared the start of Ramadan, Islam's holy month of fasting, when the crescent moon of Ramadan was sighted in the afterglow of sunset on March 4. Clerics in other North African and Gulf states, as well as those in Southeast Asia, made the same proclamation following similar sightings, or after consulting astronomical calendars. During the next month, the world's one billion Muslims are to abstain from eating, drinking, making love, and smoking from dawn to dusk.

Volcanoes


 Mount Pinatubo, whose eruptions in the Philippines eight months ago killed at least 800 people, was the site of 31 volcanic tremors during the week. Experts warned that it might be months before the 5,770-foot mountain erupts again, but warned people against entering the six-mile safety zone around the crater. About 100 miles to the south, Taal has shown no further signs of activity since a swarm of tremors forced thousands to evacuate its volcanic island in mid-February. Most inhabitants have now returned home.

**Droughts**


 The onset of rain and snow across northern China helped to ease a winter-long drought. The most severe dry spell in 63 years has developed in many areas that were devastated by last summer's record floods.

Dry weather for the past few months in the northern Andes has stilled many hydroelectric generating stations, causing power cuts and brown outs in much of Ecuador and parts of neighboring Colombia.


Wildfire

 A prolonged dry spell in the southern Philippines sparked a fire that destroyed nearly 700 acres of young-growth forest. The destroyed trees in southern Negros were planted just a little more than two years ago by private contractors. The area was scheduled to be turned over to the government this year, and made into a nature preserve.

Earthquakes

 A sharp temblor centered off the coast of Papua New Guinea damaged a school and more than a dozen houses in the northern industrial city of Lae. Six people were killed and 180 homes destroyed when a magnitude 4.8 quake struck Iran's Lordegan region. Earth movements were also felt in Argentina's San Miguel de Tucuman area, northern Chile, the eastern Kamchatka Peninsula, and east-central Alaska.

Tropical Storms

 Tropical Cyclone Esau caused widespread damage to crops and houses in the Solomon Islands. The storm later became the most powerful to lash New Caledonia in 20 years, but caused relatively little damage. Severe tropical cyclone Ian moved ashore along Australia's sparsely-populated northwestern coast without inflicting significant damage. In

the Indian Ocean, cyclones Farida, Gerda, and Heather were only threats to shipping lanes.

Dog Food

 Taiwanese officials have urged citizens to stop eating traditional dishes of dog meat for fear of harming the island's image overseas. The semi-official Central News Agency reported that Yu Yu-hsien, chairman of the cabinet's Council of Agriculture, sent copies of a petition from British animal lovers to local government departments. The letter, signed by 2,000 Britons, strongly condemned the killing of dogs for food in Taiwan, and suggested a drop in tourism and commerce might occur if the practice continued. Dog meat is popular in Taiwan and many parts of China because of its reputed nutritional value and warming effect in winter.

Additional Sources: Australian Bureau of Meteorology, U. S. Climate Analysis Center, U. S. Earthquake Information Center, and the World Meteorological Organization.



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TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT by L.M. Boyd

Medieval rumormongers bruited about the whimsy that alchemists could make poison from the fat of red-haired people.

It has been said, The Wages of Sin, too, go unreported.

So sensitive is the hearing of a bat that it can detect the sound of a mouse twitching a whisker.

"A cynic," wrote H.L. Mencken, "is a man who, when he smells flowers, looks around for a coffin."

Oldest letter of the alphabet is "O."

The late Greta Garbo once explained to a friend why she was so depressed on that particular day: "I had an awful row with God this morning."

Statisticians with a databank full of rap-sheet information on perpetrators of violent crimes divided entries into four categories: "young," "male," "drunk," and "mentally ill." The computer run showed the "mentally ill" had committed far fewer such felonies than any of the other three.

Your nose was 90 percent grown when you were 13, if you're female, or 15, if you're male.

The musical man B.B. King said, "Nobody loves me like my mother, and she could be jivin', too."

Shouldn't all video stores sell popcorn?

I told my editor that giraffes become vulnerable to attack when they drink water, and she said, Let them drink beer.

That common communications device now known as the "intercom" originally was called an "electric annunciator."

In the Dallas police records is a report of a remarkable mugging. The complainant said a man carrying a dead pigeon stopped him on the street and demanded his money. And then pigeon-whipped him.

On each of the 31 days in January of 1984, book buyers in the United States bought more than 50,000 copies of 1984.

Q. How much did Yogi Berra get when he first signed with the Yankees?
A. \$500. Went to the minors.

Am told those who decaffeinate coffee don't just throw the caffeine away. Not anymore. They sell it. To drug companies and cola makers.

You've read the conclusion of police psychologists that 25 out of every 100 murder victims invite their own killings. The three deadliest words in the English language, some contend, are: "Go ahead, shoot...."

Order "mountain chicken" in Dominica and you get frog's legs the size of chicken drumsticks.

Millionaires were mighty rare in 1843. So rare the word "millionaire," freshly coined by newspaper writers in obituaries of tobacco magnate Pierre Lorillard, was printed for decades thereafter only in italics.

Women of the world work about twice as many hours as men, and work mostly unpaid. Such were the findings in one international study.

Q. How many miles per gallon does an M-1 tank get?
A. 0.56.

If cats ate nothing but vegetables, they'd go blind, says a veterinarian.

What's so special about Andreas Constantine of Athens, Greece, is he's thought to be the only man in the world who has memorized all 158 verses of Greece's national anthem.

Hollywood censors of the 1930s banned the word "buzzard."

Q. What were the dying words of Humphrey Bogart?
A. "I should never have switched from Scotch to Martinis."

Unripe mulberries are said to be hallucinogenic.

If you have 250 chin whiskers, you're just about average. Sir.

In the record, too, are the last three words uttered by American Revolutionary leader Ethan Allen. His minister told him the angels were waiting for him. He said, "...Let 'em wait."

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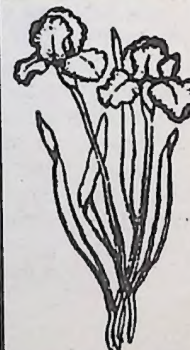
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Photo: Jennifer Burdick

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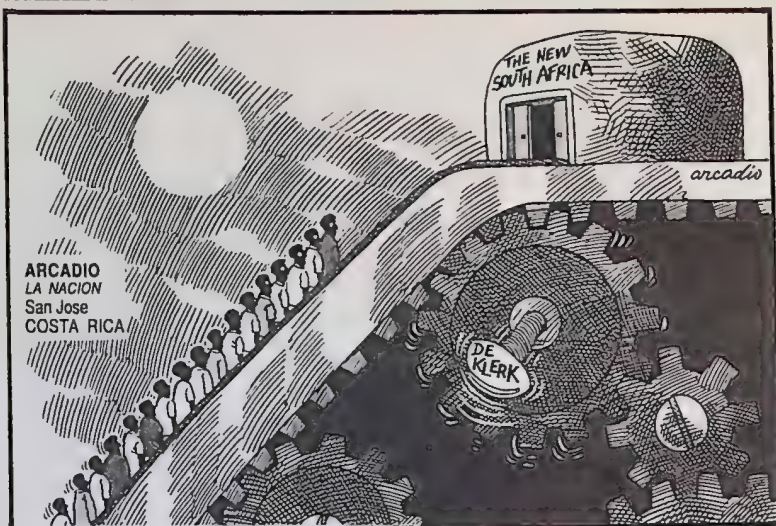
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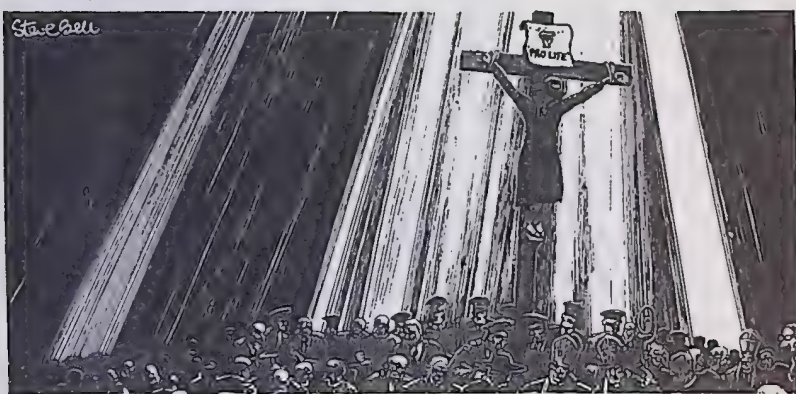
Amherst, MA
413-256-8958

Whenever I take a break from inventing physics,
I relax by playing Mozart. Then I relax from
Mozart by reading the
Valley Comic News.

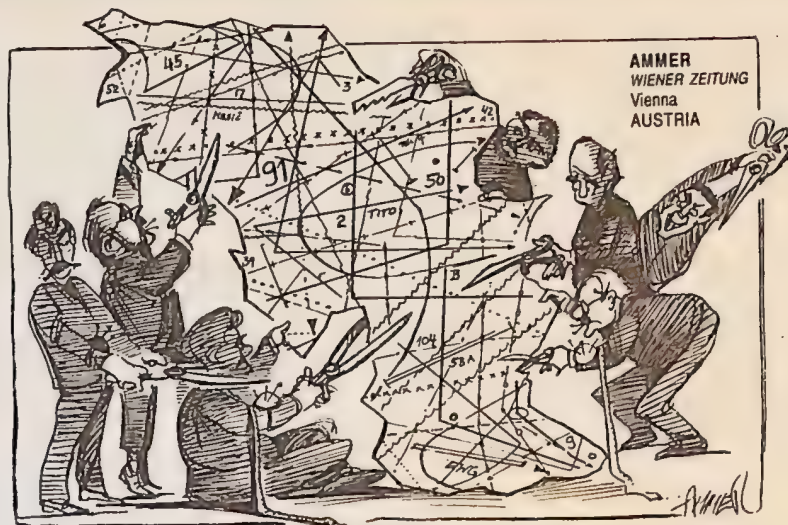




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I CAN stand here waiting for my
TAX Refund or...Hmmm...Its TUESDAY...
TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY= 2 FOR 1 @ VIDEO-TO-GO...
Hmmm...THEREFORE I can catch up on
my FELLINI AND wait for my tax refund...

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THIS MODERN WORLD BY TOM TOMORROW

TOM TOMORROW 92

THIS MODERN WORLD

TOM TOMORROW 92

SPARKY™ IS ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL...

PAT BUCHANAN SAYS THAT AIDS IS NATURE'S RETRIBUTION FOR HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR.



I SAY THAT PAT BUCHANAN IS A RACIST, ANTI-SEMITIC NAZI APOLOGIST WITH NO TOLERANCE AND NO COMPASSION.



HE IS THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF THE SMALL-MINDED BIGOTRY, SELFISHNESS AND HATRED OF THE RIGHT WING. IN SHORT--



--PAT BUCHANAN IS NATURE'S RETRIBUTION FOR VOTING REPUBLICAN!



THIS MODERN WORLD

IT BEGAN WITH HARRIS WOFFORD'S UNEXPECTED VICTORY IN PENNSYLVANIA... WHICH SENT REPUBLICAN STRATEGISTS SCURRYING...

GOSH--PEOPLE ARE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT PAYING FOR THEIR HEALTH CARE!

I DON'T GET IT! WHY DON'T THEY JUST WITHDRAW MORE MONEY FROM THEIR TRUST FUNDS?



FORCED TO FINALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUE, PRESIDENT BUSH EXPLAINED WHY A SYSTEM OF NATIONALIZED MEDICINE WOULD BE A BAD IDEA--

SURE--EVERYONE WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE...

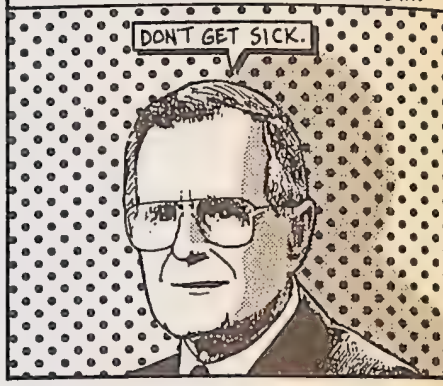
...BUT THERE WOULD BE LONG LINES!



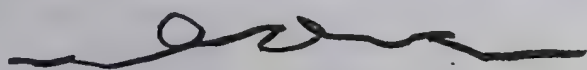
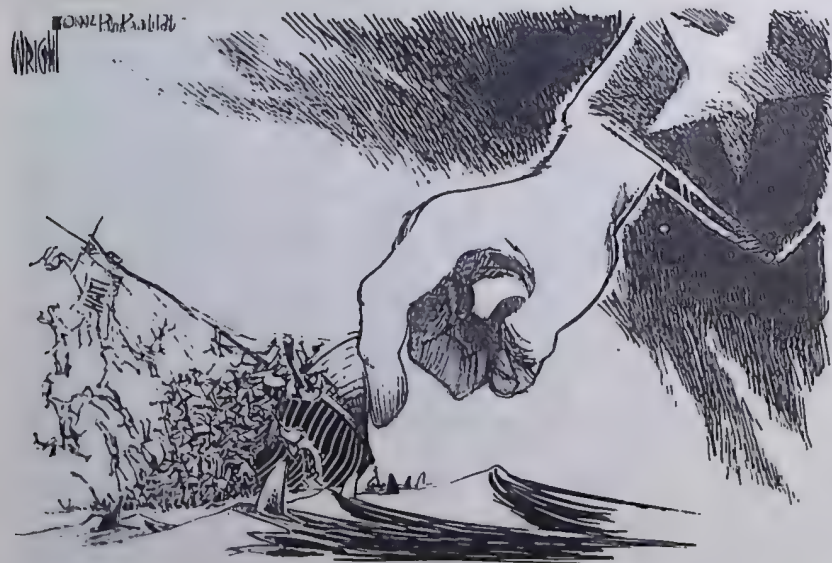
DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES QUICKLY EMBRACED THE HEALTH CARE ISSUE WITH THE MORAL FERVOR OF ONE WHOSE PARTY HAS BEEN OUT OF POWER FOR TWELVE YEARS...



--AND THEN UNVEILED HIS OWN BOLD, VISIONARY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.



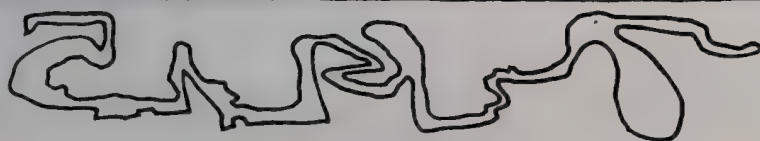
OTHER STUFF



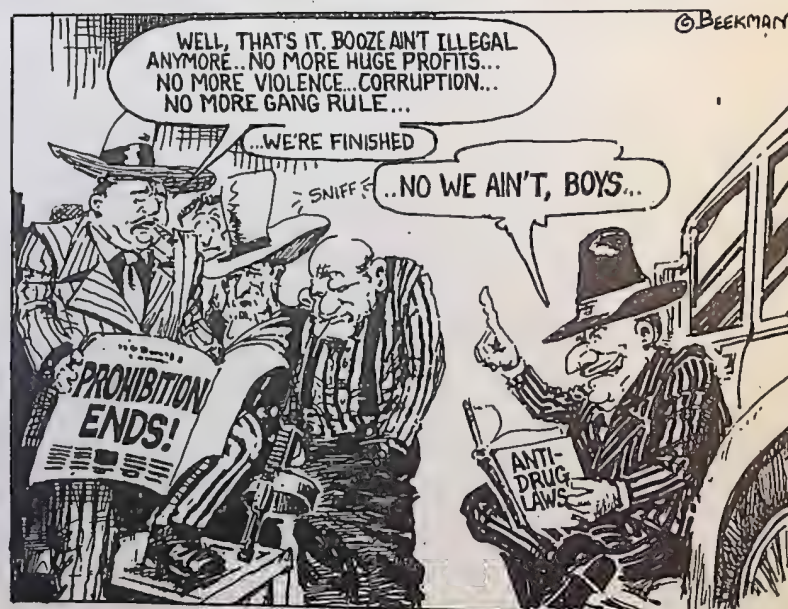
Drawn by eight-month-old baby playing with crayon.



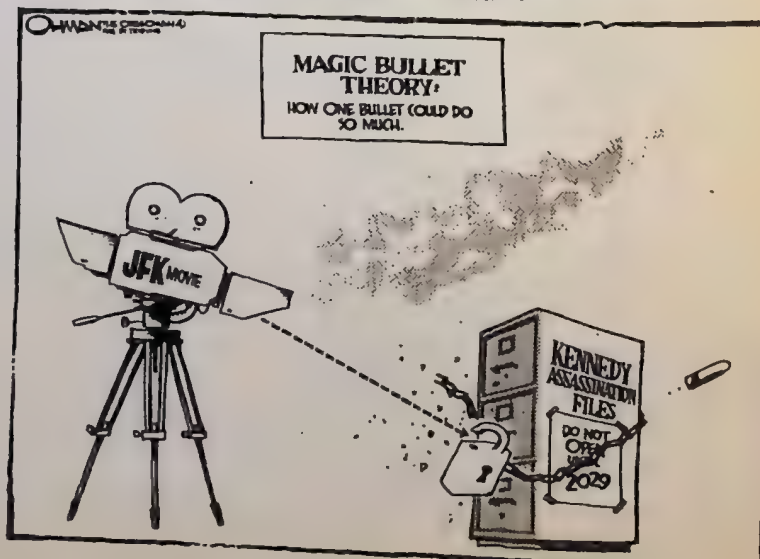
Drawn by chimpanzee playing with felt-tip pen.



Drawn by politicians playing with new congressional districts.



A GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED BUSINESS

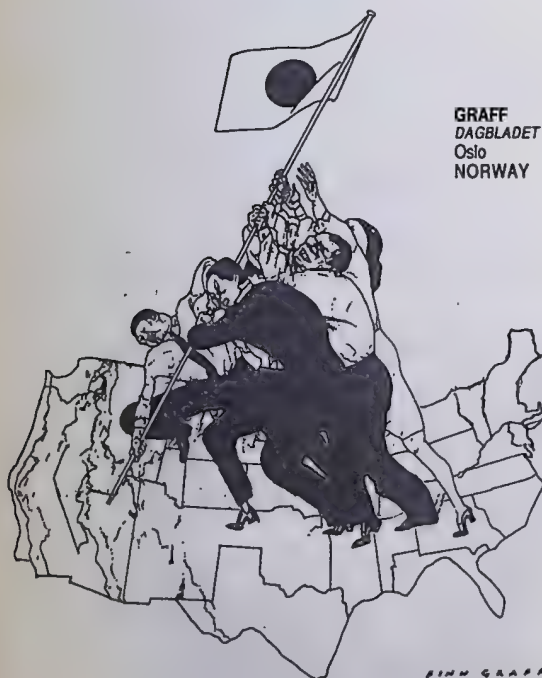




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IT'S BACK ON THE OLD CAMPAIGN TRAIL, FULL TIME.....
... (FOR GEORGE BUSH, TOO) ...



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THE VIEW FROM THE REPENT-HOUSE PRESENTS: POPCORN ANXIETY

Susan McDowell

MY ROOMMATES SEEM TO THINK TOO MUCH THAT I EAT TOO MUCH POPCORN. NOT THAT I'M DEFENSIVE OR ANYTHING, BUT POPCORN IS THE PERFECT FOOD! IT CONTAINS FIBER AND OTHER WHOLESOME AND IT'S ALSO CHEAP AND IT FILLS YOU UP! SO WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT EATING IT THREE TIMES A DAY?!

I SHOULD BE PROUD TO STAND UP AND COUNT MYSELF AMONG THE POPCORN-ACHIEVERS! I SHOULD BE PROUD TO SAY: "YES! I EAT POPCORN AND I VOTE!"

I SHOULD... WHOOPS! HI! WE'RE GONNA GO!!

HEY, DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING?

LOOK! THERE'S A TRAIL OF POPCORN GOING FROM THE KITCHEN TO SUSAN'S ROOM!

THINK'R

William G. Duffy, Jr.



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A HARD RAIN'S GONNA FALL



---- Hot Standup Comedy ---- ---- Springfield and Northampton ----

If you watch comedy on cable TV, you are probably familiar with Gallagher, the comedian who has appeared in more comedy specials than anyone else. On Thursday, April 2nd, he will be performing live at Springfield's Symphony Hall. Wielding his trademark Sledge-O-Matic, Gallagher showers the audience with the pulverized remains of apples, lettuce, fruitcakes, and Big Macs. His audiences are so well aware of his antics that they regularly come to his concerts equipped with raincoats, umbrellas, and sunglasses with wipers on them.

Gallagher's comedy is more than outrageous stunts and bizarre props, however. He is an acerbic observer of human nature whose originality is more than merely stylistic. It's as if his job is to notice all the little, offbeat stuff in the world and report it back to us.

Gallagher's live show is also unique in the amount of preparation he does for each city he performs in. It's not unusual for him to refer to local politics, problems, or personalities during the course of the evening, making him one of the few comedians providing customized performances.

.....

If you watch comedy *only* on cable TV, you are probably *not* familiar with Lea Delaria. This nationally known comic, with a background and training in theater and vocal music, brings her new show, *Butchfemmelezziedykefag*, to the Northampton Center for the Arts on Friday and Saturday, April 3-4. Last year's show, *Lesbo-A-Go-Go*, attracted sell-out crowds here.

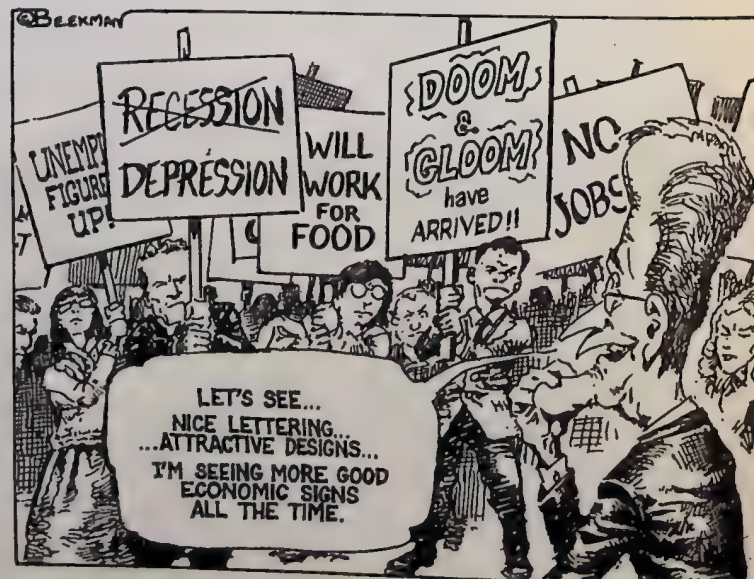
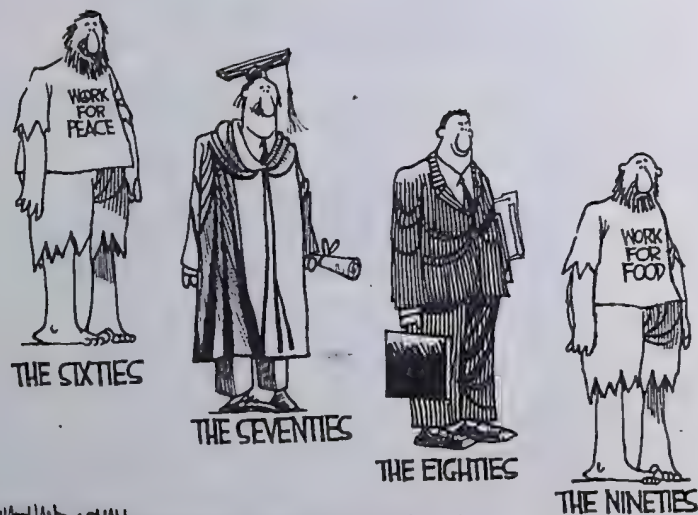
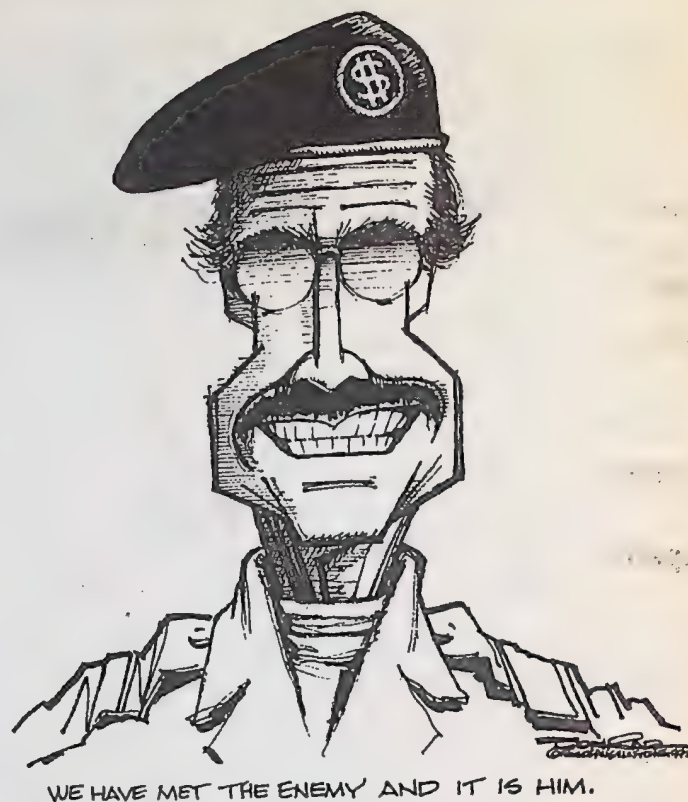
In 10 years of performing, Delaria has garnered much acclaim and many honors, including Outstanding Comedy Entertainer in San Francisco, one of New York City's Ten Funniest Women, P-Town's Golden Gull award, and a designation in the *Boston Globe* as "the lesbian Lennie Bruce."

She describes her comedy style as "a cross between Ralph Kramden, Robin Williams, and Martina Navratilova. I'm loud, I'm vulgar, and I'm funny." Delaria's insights on relationships, dating, sex, and growing up are relevant to a broad audience. In an interview with *Provincetown Magazine* she relates how much she enjoys "getting a lot of heterosexuals at my show. They can relate to a lot of the material, and they're checking out that we're just people. They really get that!"

Delaria has had chances to be on TV, but only on condition that she not say she is a lesbian. "Until they're willing to accept me as I am, then I won't be on the Carson show," she says. "But there are other places that will have me."

Comedy is better live, anyway.

DOLLARS AND SENSE



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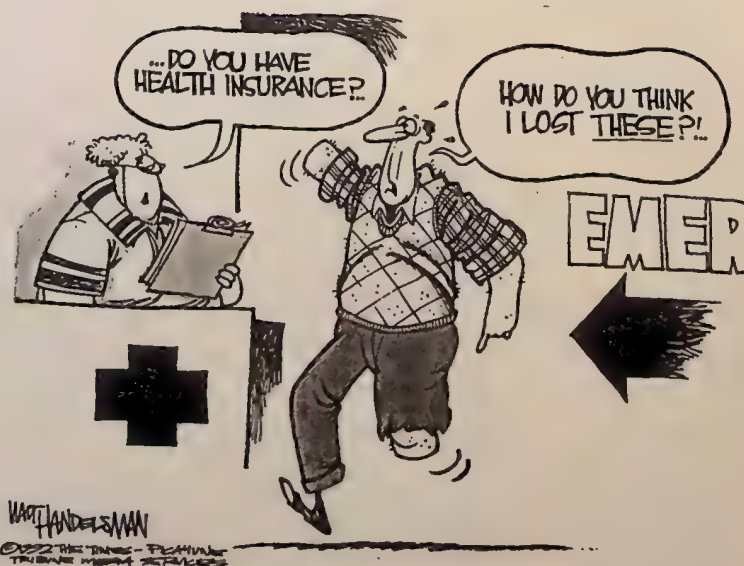
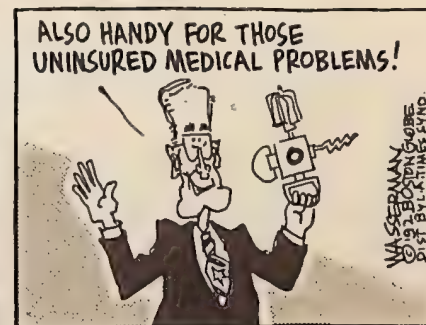
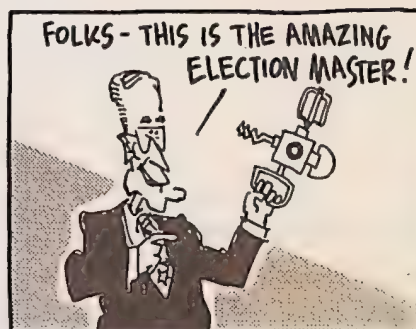
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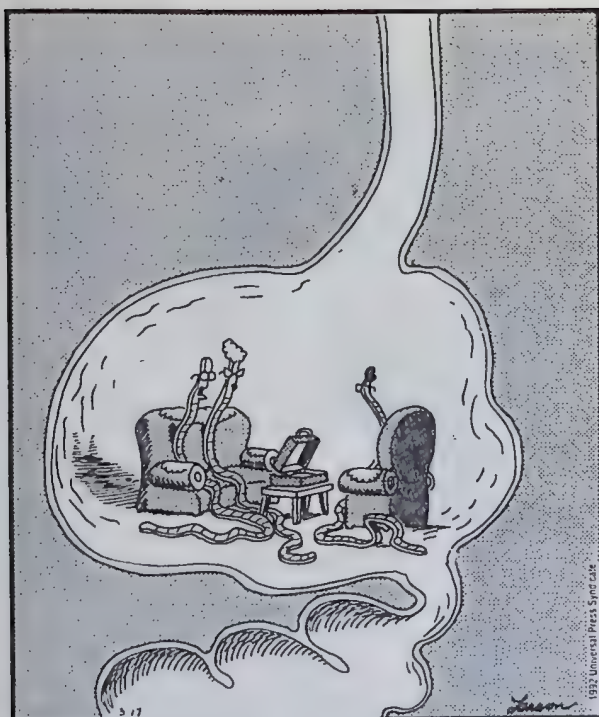
lea delaria is
bukh Lemmelezziedyke fag

at the
northampton center
for the arts
17 new south st.
april 3+4, 1992
8.00 pm

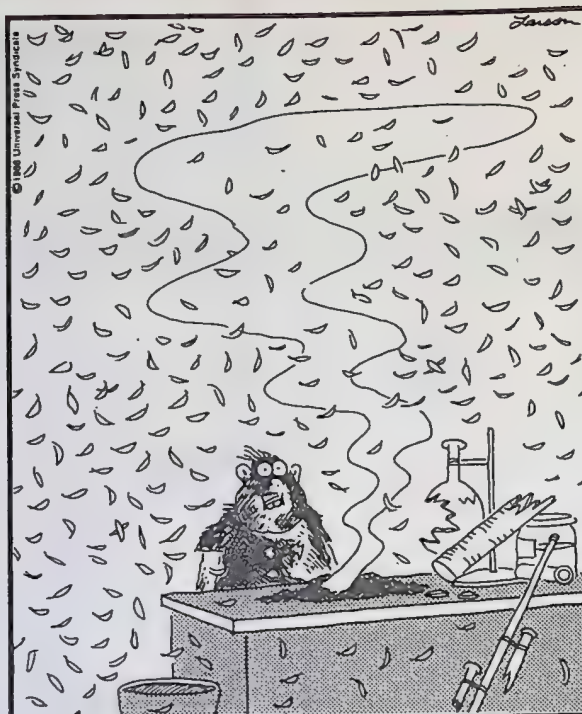
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THE FAR SIDE

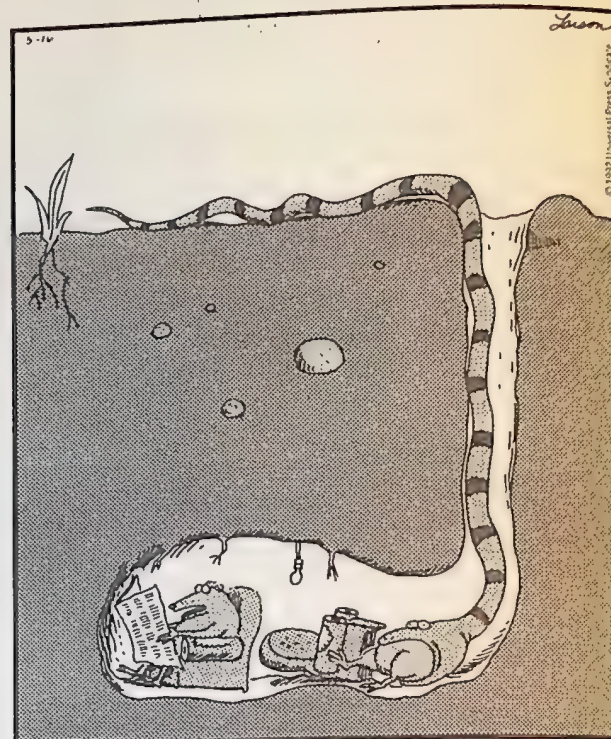
By GARY LARSON



"Well, I'm not sure if we can afford stomach insurance — right now we're trying to put the kids through the small intestine."



God as a kid tries to make a chicken in his room.



"Well, I'll be darned. Says here 70 percent of all accidents happen in the hole."

Dr. Gary S. Lasneski

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— GARY S. LASNESKI

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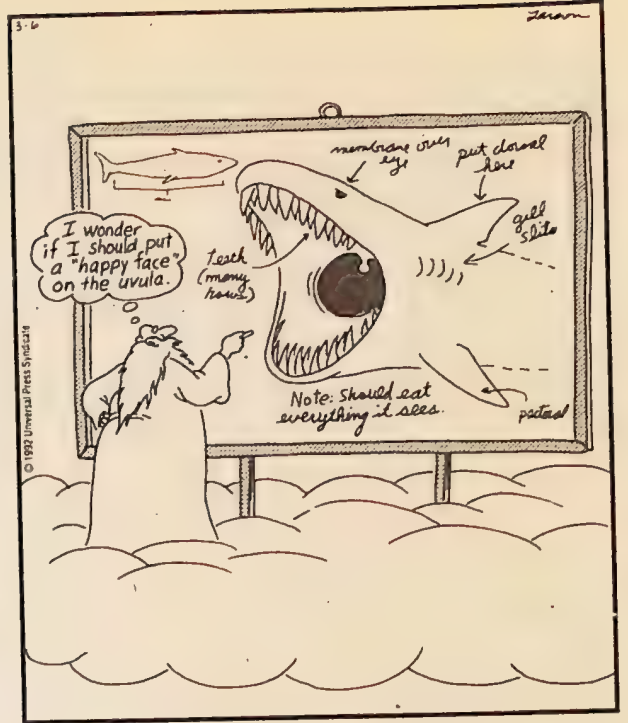
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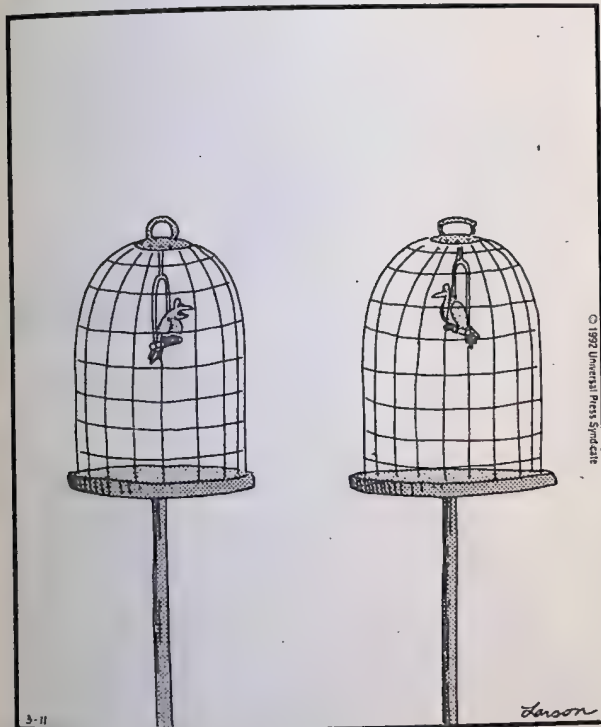
Basic lives



Sumo temporaries



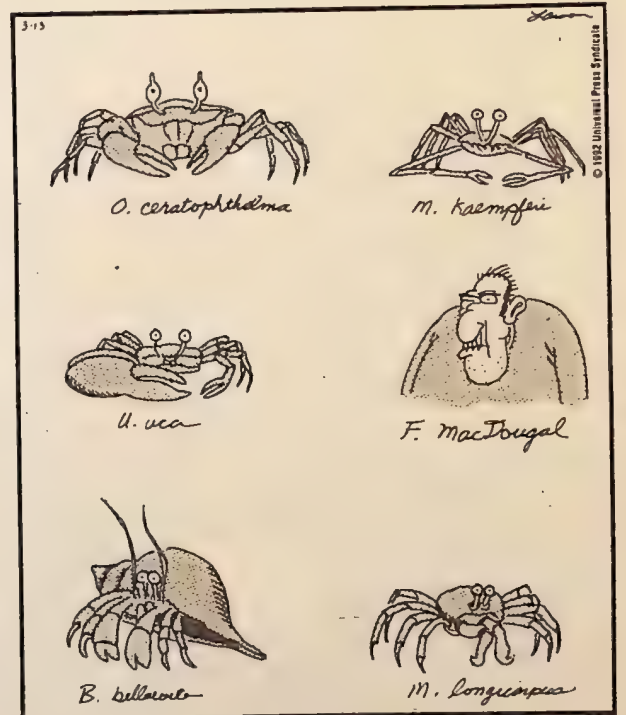
God designs the great white shark



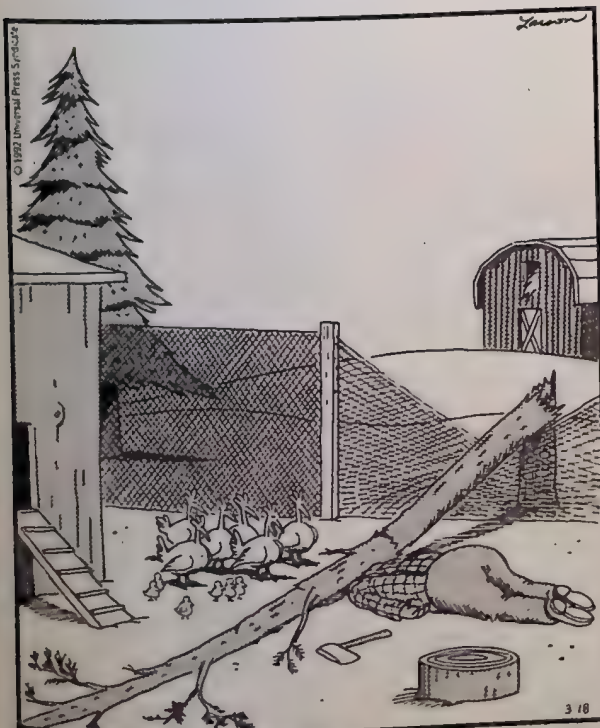
"Oh, yeah? Well, maybe I'll just come over there and rattle your cage!"



"Oh my God! It's Yvonne!"



Some of our common crabs



"Lord, we thank thee."



Lacking a horse, Jed was compelled to just drift along with the tumbling tumbleweed.



calvin and Hobbes

by BILL WATTERSON

My girlfriend and I have broken up
and gotten back together a million
times.

We have seen the worst qualities
in two human beings.

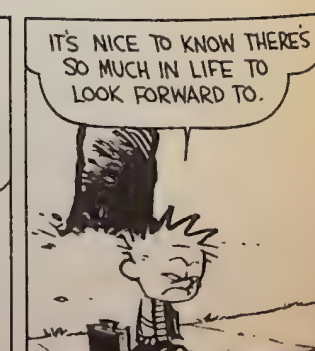
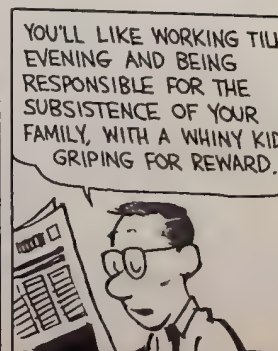
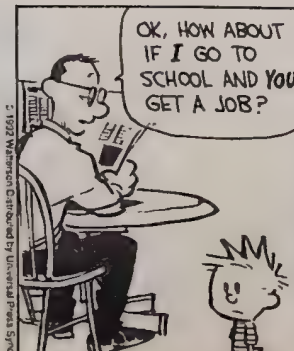
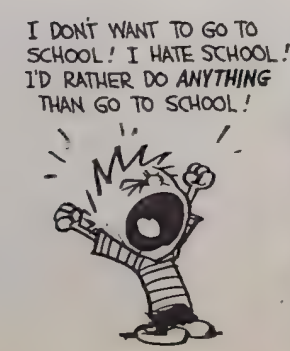
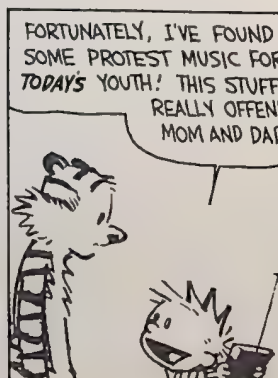
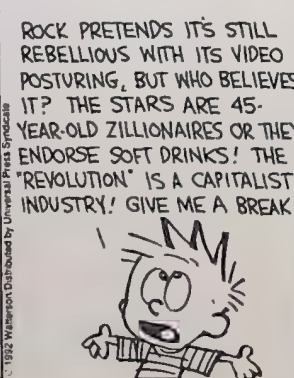
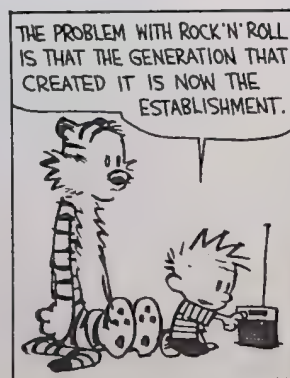
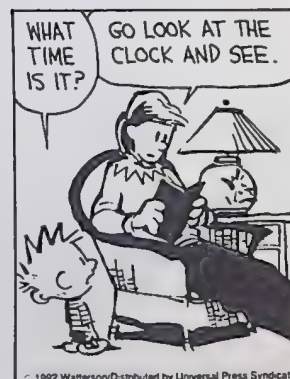
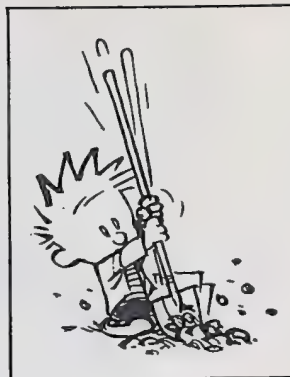
We've had lunch with the misfit
king of nasty remarks.

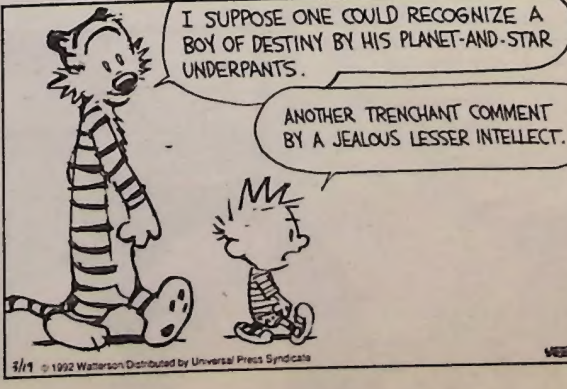
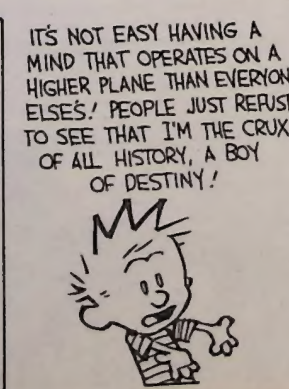
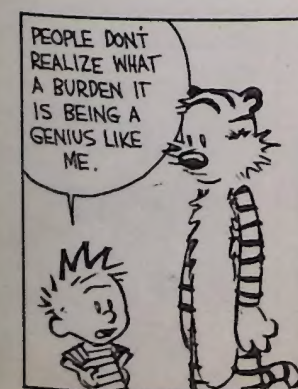
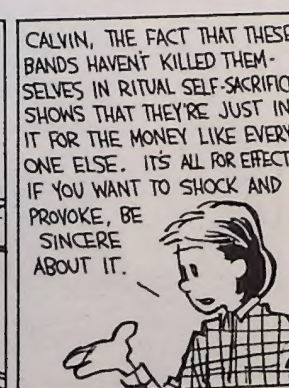
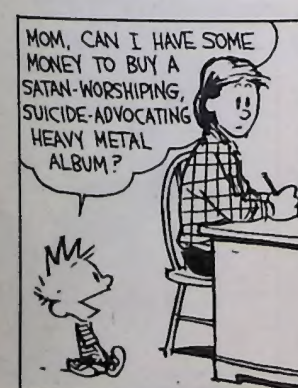
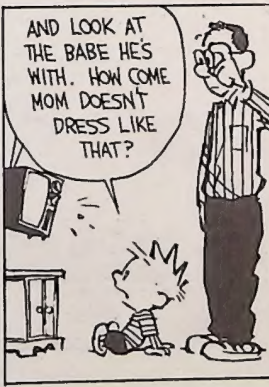
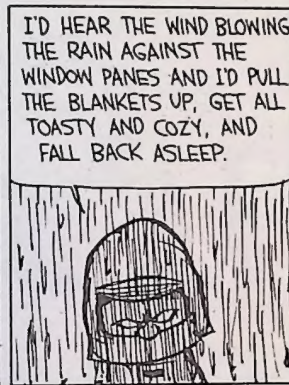
We have looked into the face of
the devil-of-bad-relationships.

We have been tampered with by
the anti-christ of love affairs.

We've been molested by the evil
blind mole who lives in the most
hidden caves of a busted heart.

It's been a lot of fun
apologizing.





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humor me

by Izzy Gesell

I come to you from my private room at Low-Tech World. I have been here for 6 months. I'm afflicted with "technostress", the contemporary disease caused by the pressures of dealing with a high-tech society. Subconsciously, my body was trying to emulate the speed and perfection of the computer-driven universe I live in. Thirty-minute pizza delivery and One Hour Martinizing were no longer adequate. I wanted nanosecond-paced results and I wanted them NOW.

I lost it one afternoon at the bank when I was told my balance was "unavailable" because the computer was down.

"Just go in the back and look it up," I asked calmly. "It's got to be here somewhere."

"Can't," the teller answered. "There's nothing I can do when the computer is down."

I tried to leap over the counter to strangle her and the next thing I knew I was here, talking to Dr. Miltown. He explained how computers were supposed to make life easier for humanity but instead were making things more difficult. "Technology forces us to deal less with other human beings and more with machines. The price is a loss of personal connection. Even simple errands like banking and filling the car with gas were once occasions for personal contact with other human beings. Now, ATM's and self-serve gas stations force us to be alone." Alone with the computer. Alone with no recourse when "the computer is down."

Understanding technostress helped to explain some puzzling aspects of my behavior such as being unable to deal with voice mail. I always wait for the operator to pick up. I keep hoping for Express Voice Mail, a phone system directly tied to a live voice at the other end.

So used to answering machines am I that I can't speak coherently when a person unexpectedly answers the phone. I go, "uh, uh, uh. Why are you answering the phone I was expecting the machine." Then I hang up.

I once was in love with the ATM. When they first appeared I was able to bank at 3AM, saving myself 6 hours. Now, if there is a person ahead of me I drive to another location.

Using my new, fast computer was a delight until I had to use my old one again. Complaining about how slow the old one was, I realized I was antsy waiting 6 seconds instead of 3 for the screen to come up.

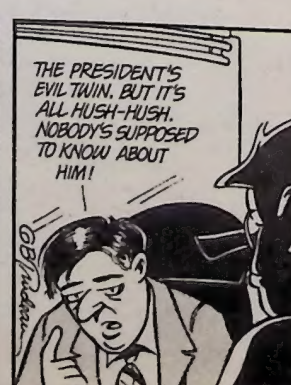
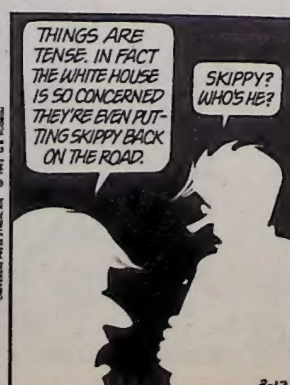
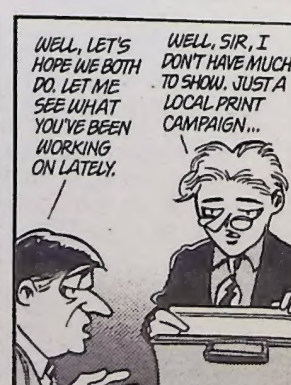
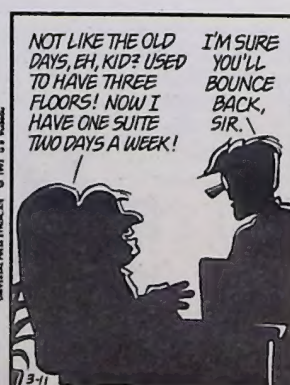
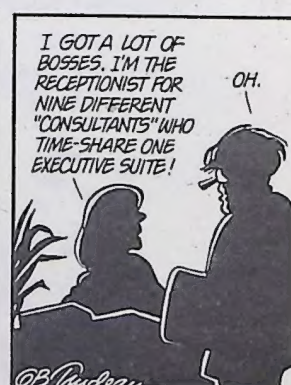
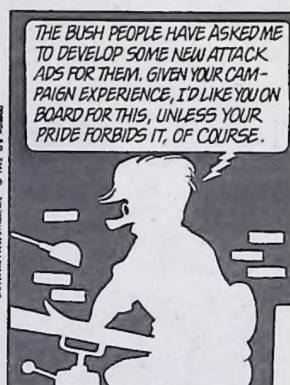
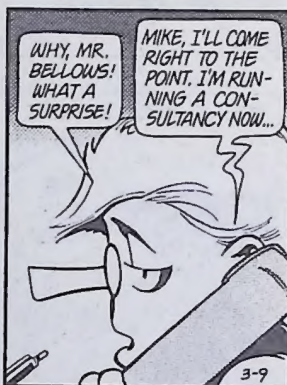
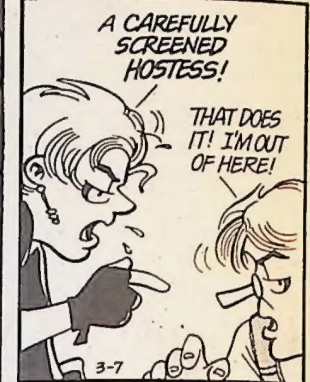
I've been able to program my VCR to record all the shows I want to see but don't have time for. I now have an extensive tape collection of shows I wanted to see but I can't find the time to watch them.

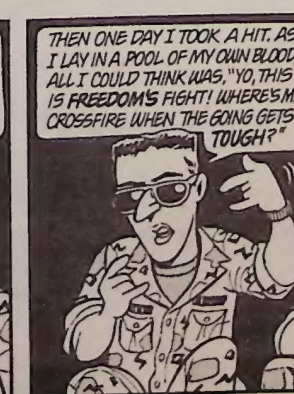
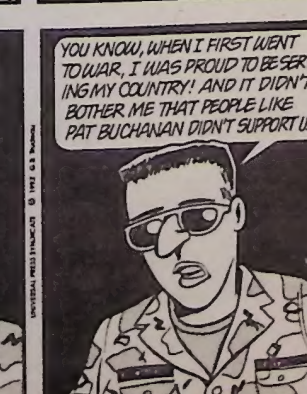
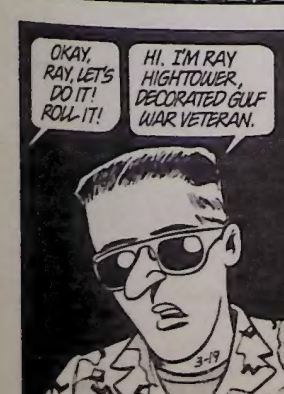
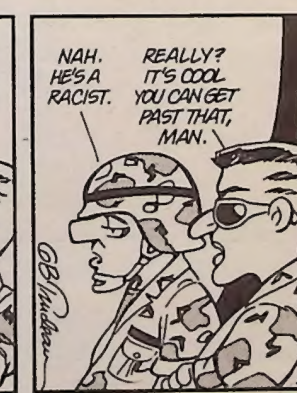
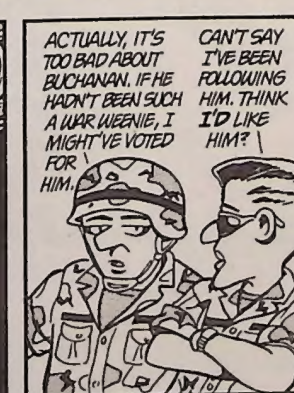
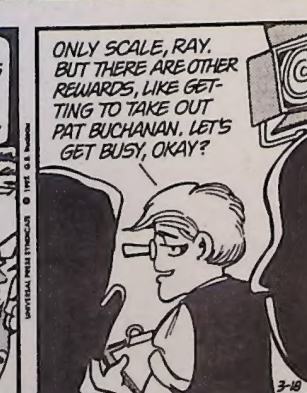
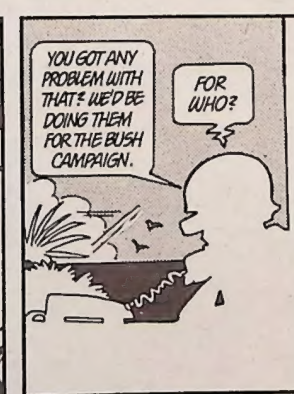
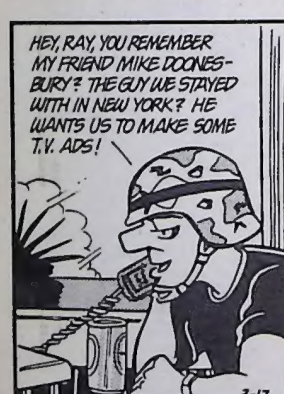
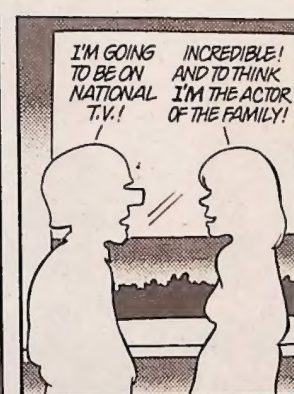
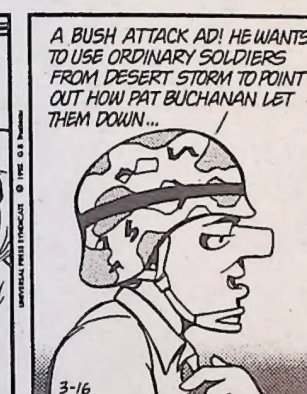
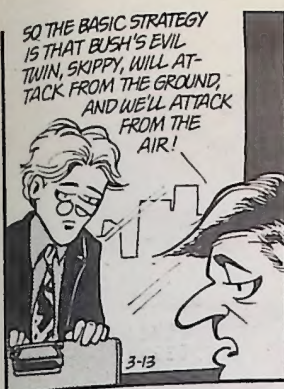
One evening I found myself, potato in hand, in front of the microwave. "Do I have 5 minutes to bake this?" I asked myself. Immediately, I heard my grandmother's voice. "Idiot! You're complaining about waiting 5 minutes for a potato? We used to have to wait an hour for a baked potato. What's your rush?" Since my grandmother's been dead for thirty years I knew I was getting stressed.

It's very restful here at Low-Tech World. The only video game is Pong. The evening movies are shown on 16mm projectors by AV monitors. Very often, the film breaks or the projector overheats. When that happens the lights go on and the folks in the audience just talk among themselves.

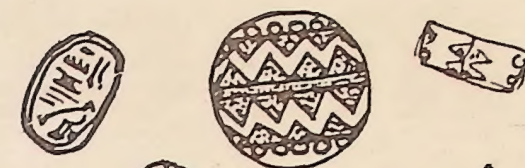
Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

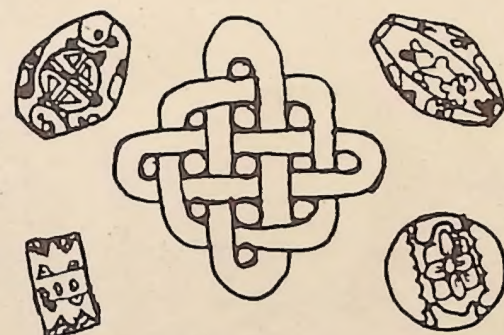




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